

School and Masonic Temple  
Main street of Bannack  
Bannack, Beaverhead County  
Montana

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction  
1000 Geary Street  
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PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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SCHOOL AND MASONIC TEMPLE

Bannack, Beaverhead County, Montana

LOCATION: On the main street of Bannack. Bannack is located 25 miles southwest of Dillon in the southwestern part of Montana.

OWNER: State Parks Division, Montana Highway Commission, Helena, Montana.

OCCUPANT: None.

USE: None.

BRIEF STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This building has an unusual arrangement of a school house on the first floor and a Masonic Lodge on the second floor. The Masonic Order played a major role in establishing early day law and order in the mining towns of the west, and the problem of education was important to the people of the early mining towns.

I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and Subsequent Owners: Masonic Lodge No. 16, A.F. & A.M. Now under the jurisdiction of the State Highway Commission, Helena, Montana.
2. Date of Erection: 1874.
3. Architect: Unknown.

4. Builder: Unknown.
5. Original Plans: None known.
6. Notes on Alterations and Additions: Windows on the east wall were boarded over at one time. Other changes, if any, are unknown.
7. Important Old Views:
  - a. Overall view of Bannack includes this building. Photograph (date unknown) supplied for the Photo-Data Book by courtesy of the Historical Society of Montana.
  - b. An exterior view showing school children and adults in front of the building, dated (by someone unknown) 1878. Permission to copy the photograph for the Photo-Data Book was granted by Mable Ovitt of Bannack.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

1. Masons, who came to Bannack with the discovery of gold, first met for the purpose of forming a Lodge there in the winter of 1862-3. They applied to the Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Nebraska for a charter, but it was not granted.
2. Bannack Lodge No. 16, A.F. & A.M. was chartered on October 3, 1871. The charter was transferred to Dillon on October 21, 1921, where Lodge No. 16 is active today.
3. It is assumed that the building was used as a school until the time of the transfer of Lodge No. 16, A.F. & A.M., to Dillon, perhaps longer. Census taken in 1920-21 reveals only 59 inhabitants of Bannack.
4. No reference is made to the use of the building in the fortification of the town during the Nez Perce War when Chief Joseph camped nearby.
5. The town site of Bannack, prior to being turned over to the state for a State Monument, was purchased by C. W. Stallings of Bannack for \$1400. Sale excluded the Methodist Church and the School-Lodge building.

6. Town site became a State Monument in 1954.
7. Townsite was designated as a National Landmark in 1962.

C. References:

1. Leeson, M.A., History of Montana, 1739-1885, Chicago - Warner, Beers & Company, 1885, P. 481.
2. Records of the Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M. of Montana, Helena, Montana.
3. "Prospector Trail", State Parks Division, Montana Highway Commission, Helena, Montana.
4. Sanders, Helena F., A History of Montana, Chicago - Lewis Publishing Company, 1913.
5. Conferred with Dr. Stan Davison, Western Montana College of Education, Dillon, Montana.
6. Conferred with Dick Pace, author and historian, Helena, Montana.

## II ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: A modified or western adaptation of the Greek Revival style. Wood pilasters adorn the two front corners of the building while the pilasters on the rear corners are found only on the side elevations. The rear of the structure lacks any ornamentation.
2. Condition of Structure: Poor.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: 22'-6" x 42'-3".
2. Foundations: Assay rock, rubble construction having edge beams of wood 8" x 8". Concrete retaining walls poured outside of the stone wall.

3. Wall Construction: A balloon frame construction of 2 x 6 studs. The 6" bevel siding is nailed directly to the studs.
4. Chimneys: One brick chimney.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and Doors: Main (north) entrance has wood Doric pilasters supporting a plain entablature framing the four-paneled wood door which has a rectangular transom that has two horizontal lights. There are also small vertical rectangular lights in framework on either side. Other doors have simple squared stock trim.
  - b. Windows: 6/6 double-hung wood windows. The wood pegs used in construction are visible in some of the window frames. Windows have a simple squared trim. The front windows and those on the sides of the building have a decorative wood capping that frames the top of the opening while the rear (south) four windows do not. Hinges for external shutters are found on some of the window frames.
6. Roof:
  - a. Shape: Gable roof having hand-split wood shakes.
  - b. Framing: Rafters of 2 x 4s at 16" o.c., having collar beams of 1 x 5s. A single vertical member, also a 1" x 5", ties to the ceiling joists, which are 2 x 6s.
  - c. Cornice, Eaves: Boxed-in eaves. Cornice across the front (north) elevation has a simple classical detailing. The rear gable end is left plain.
  - d. Cupola: A wood louvered cupola with a rear access door (destroyed) to the roof is located on the ridge line and in line with the gable end of the front of the building. Roof of the cupola is hand-split wood shakes.
7. External Staircase: The only access to the second floor was gained by an outside staircase, long since gone.

C. Technical Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans: The first floor, used for a school has an entry hall with small rooms on either side. The entry hall leads to a single large rectangular room. The second floor plan has a small reception room in the southeast corner of the building, adjacent to another room that runs the rest of the way across the rear of the building. A large "lodge room" takes up the rest of the area of the second floor.
2. Stairway: External; now gone.
3. Floor Construction: A girder runs the full length of the building supported by stone piers and supporting 2"x6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " floor joists at 16" o.c. An original floor of 1" boards was laid perpendicular to the floor joists. Later, flooring was applied consisting of 1" sub-floor laid perpendicular to the original floor boards, and 3/4" soft wood finish flooring at right angles, thereto.
4. Walls and Ceiling Finish: Plaster. There is also a wood wainscot in the school room area.
5. Doorways and Doors: Wood frames with 4-paneled doors.
6. Trim: Wood trim with mouldings.
7. Hardware: Cast iron.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and Orientation: Located along the main street of Bannack adjacent to a creek bed and diagonally across from the County Court House. The building faces north and is set back from the street about thirty-five feet.
2. Walks: Front walk of wood planks; mostly gone today.

Prepared by,

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January 1964

APPROVED:

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DATE: *April 1964*

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